

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
The Future of Media and the)	GN Docket No. 10-25
Contributions of Public Media to the)	
Information Needs of America)	
To the Commission		

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, INC.

Kinsey Wilson
Senior Vice President & General Manager,
NPR Digital Media
Gregory A. Lewis
Associate General Counsel
Michael Starling
Chief Technology Officer and
Executive Director, NPR Labs
Rishi Hingoraney
Director – Public Policy & Legislation
Michael Riksen
Vice President – Policy & Representation

National Public Radio, Inc.
635 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 513-2741

May 7, 2010

Introduction

Public radio's service to America is a continuing commitment to audience engagement, an increasing dedication to news, journalism, cultural programming and public affairs and an expanding deployment of technology to reach new and more diverse audiences with more impact. NPR, its public radio station partners and programming allies American Public Media (APM), Public Radio International (PRI), the Public Radio Exchange (PRX) are primary news, information and cultural programming sources to communities in every corner of the United States with an annually growing audience that in 2009 totaled 34 million Americans.¹

The public radio system comprises some 900 stations that broadcast, stream and podcast award winning local, regional, national and international news and information². Journalism is the primary focus of public radio with approximately 185 stations devoted full-time to news and another 480 stations with mixed formats that feature news prominently. Roughly one-third of programming aired by public radio stations is locally-produced and deals with community and regional topics of importance.

The total audience for public radio has grown more than 150 percent over the course of the last 20 years (1989-2009), while in the past five years (2004-2009) alone the weekly audience of NPR stations has increased by 9 percent³ and today totals more than the combined paid circulation of the top 52 national newspapers, which includes *USA*

¹ ACT 1 based on Arbitron Nationwide, Fall 2009, Monday-Sunday 6am-12midnight, All Public Stations.

² Since 1971, NPR and its journalists and programming have won hundreds of awards including 32 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, 53 George Foster Peabody Awards, 37 awards from the White House News Photographers Association, 16 Webby Awards (including 3 Webby "Peoples' Voice" awards) and 17 awards from the Overseas Press Club of America.

³ Arbitron Nationwide, Persons 12+, Monday-Sunday, 6a-midnight, Spring to Spring comparisons.

Today, *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. This growth in audience service is in contrast to trends elsewhere in media. Over the same period, newspapers audiences have declined by 29 percent, nightly network news by 24 percent and commercial radio news by 29 percent.⁴

On average, the audience for NPR spends six hours per week listening, with 94 percent of listeners indicating that the programming is personally important. In 22 of the country's largest 30 markets, public radio stations were either first or second in attracting intentional listening, a commitment of loyalty and engagement found no where else in media.⁵ According to the Pew Research Center, in the past ten years NPR is the only news source to see an increase in the proportion of its audience that believes "all or most" of its news coverage.⁶ Each year, 2.5 million public radio listeners demonstrate their commitment by donating more than \$310 million to local public radio stations.⁷

Public radio collectively deploys more than 1400 reporters, editors and producers in 21 domestic and 17 foreign bureaus and stations across the United States representing a robust and growing on-the-ground commitment to news gathering and journalism.⁸

News and Journalism for the 21st Century

Public radio's commitment to fostering a more informed and enriched citizenry is evident in its award-winning and highly acclaimed programming, including NPR's *All*

⁴ Research Center for the People & the Press, 2008 survey; newspaper and radio results from 1993 represent 1994 survey results. Telephone survey of 3,612 adults from April 30 to June conducted by both landline and cell phones (as reported by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009 Editions, "News Consumption Trends" Chart.)

⁵ Arbitron Tapscan, PPM Metros, Persons 12+, Monday-Sunday 6a.m-12midnight, Based on stations with at least 50,000 cume listeners

⁶ The Pew Research Center, "Audience Segments in a Changing News Environment," August 2008, <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/444.pdf>

⁷ CPB FY 08 Public Radio Revenue Report

⁸ CPB salary survey data 2008; NPR employment data 2009

Things Considered[®], *Morning Edition*[®], and *Fresh Air*[®]; APM's *A Prairie Home Companion*[®], *Marketplace*[®], and *Performance Today*[®]; PRI's 400 hours of weekly programming featuring the *BBC World Service*, *This American Life*[®], *To the Point*, *The World* and *Classical 24*[®]. Additionally, PRX, an online marketplace for distribution, review, and licensing of public radio programming, houses a growing social network and community of listeners, producers, and stations collaborating to reshape public radio.

NPR News embraces practices in journalism and reporting that are recognized by both audiences and media peers as benchmarks and are characterized by cutting-edge news, incisive analysis of the most important issues of the day, and engaging coverage of the arts, music and literature. Coverage ranges from fast, on-the-scene responses to recent earthquakes in Haiti and China, and to the domestic disasters like the West Virginia mining accident and BP Gulf Coast oil spill, to *America's Battalion*, the sustained, in-depth, multi-media reporting and analysis on America's involvement in Afghanistan.

In December 2009, NPR added to its original investigative capacity by hiring a Deputy Managing Editor and boosting a core investigative team to work with beat and field reporters across the newsroom. The first major result was a multipart series that aired in mid-February –“Going Radical”- about the life, background and radicalization of accused Christmas Day bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmatallab. This investigation took three NPR correspondents around the globe for clear and in-depth portraits of Abdulmatallab from London, West Africa and Yemen.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123786473>

Just within the past few months, this new commitment has produced very significant news findings in collaboration with other non-profit investigative entities:

- NPR and the Center for Public Integrity teamed up to examine the unaddressed problem of sexual assault on college campuses. This series found that despite federal laws created to protect students, colleges and universities have failed to protect women from an epidemic of sexual assault; and, that students found responsible for sexual assault are rarely expelled or suspended.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124001493>

- The Center for Investigative Reporting and NPR produced a series of stories on confidential informants that closely examined the specifics of how these government law enforcement human assets play by their own rules and, in some cases, blur the line between right and wrong or simply ignore the law.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123385312&ps=rs>

As other news organizations have scaled back on international coverage and closed overseas bureaus, NPR has expanded its commitment by maintaining 17 foreign bureaus. NPR is one of very few news organizations to maintain a full-time bureau in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Baghdad, Iraq despite escalating violence and the changing nature of US forces. An Istanbul bureau will soon be established to support coverage of the increasingly volatile events in Iran, and to provide back-up for ongoing operations in Pakistan, and the still-dangerous situation in Iraq. A new bureau in South America will augment current

reporting resources on that continent. These intrepid, dedicated foreign correspondents are gathering firsthand accounts of news events, ideas and trends, and translating them into stories that bridge the geographic divide between Moscow and Montana, Istanbul and Iowa and the Sudan and South Carolina.

In the United States, NPR correspondents live in and report from nearly every region of the country, working with their local station colleagues to provide diverse perspectives that challenge preconceived notions and deepen understanding. Foreign, domestic, online and on-air, NPR journalism is standard-setting, trustworthy, fact-based and independent. Quite simply, NPR unveils and portrays the world to its audience.

Serving Local Needs

The entirety of public radio's local and regional focus is occurring at a time of unprecedented contraction in traditional, commercial news media and during a national financial crisis that challenged all the revenue sources on which stations' operations depend. Despite its limited resources, public radio is committed to filling the void left by disappearing newspapers and other local outlets.

News gathering collaborations are used by public radio to cover regional topics with more comprehensive focus. Eighty three percent of stations exchange news stories with either other public radio stations and/or with state and regional news networks.⁹

The Northwest News Network (N3), a network of 11 public stations including Oregon Public Broadcasting, KUOW in Seattle, KPLU in Seattle and Tacoma, Boise State

⁹ Local News Station Initiative Final Report, Executive Summary

Radio, Northwest Public Radio in Pullman Washington, Spokane Public Radio, KLCC in Eugene Oregon and Jefferson Public Radio in Ashland Oregon, brings a regional perspective to daily spot news and in-depth features. N3 operates as a public radio cooperative, allowing local stations to add reporting resources and share programming within the region.

Another network of regional public radio stations and reporters is found in the Ohio River Radio Consortium. The Ohio River Radio Consortium was launched by Louisville Public Media to increase environmental literacy about the most critical issues affecting the bioregion of the Ohio River Valley.

Throughout the public radio station community, local and regional talk shows are mainstays of daily programming. From 2004 to 2009, the number of public radio stations carrying local news/talk programming rose from 595 to 681 stations, with hours aired each week increasing from 5,182 in 2004 to 5,693 in 2009.¹⁰ More than 1,400 programming segments produced by NPR member stations in both 2008 and 2009 were included in NPR news programs like *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered* and *Weekend Edition*.¹¹ Recently, public radio organizations won 122 regional Murrow awards for outstanding coverage.¹²

Roughly 90 percent of stations produce local newscasts, airing both newscast and non-newscast content primarily on weekday drive time, especially morning drive-time.

¹⁰ NPR Audience Insight & Research report on Local News Fall 2009

¹¹ NPR Reference Library report on stories filed in 2008-2009 by NPR member stations.

¹² http://www.rtdna.org/pages/media_items/2010-regional-edward-r.-morrow-award-winners1934.php?id=1934

About half of all stations carry local news content during the weekends. Most stations – 74 percent - are producing stories other than newscasts each week to insert into *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* locally; and, most news stations – 88 percent - are producing and inserting stories, with a majority of these stations inserting five or more stories per week. Stations devote the most local news coverage and their reporters’ specific beat assignments to state-local-politics, schools and education, arts and cultural events, environmental, health, and business issues. News format stations provide added coverage on local politics, education, and business, whereas music stations focus on arts and cultural affairs events.

The following is a small sampling of programs produced locally to address local community issues:

- *Eight Forty Eight*: produced by WBEZ, Chicago Public Radio, this one-hour weekday program serves up a diverse mix of news, views, people and culture—all with a distinctly local focus. Recent topics on the award-winning show include: coverage of Illinois’ new meth prevention efforts, an interview with a local documentary filmmaker, and a profile of a local organization providing English classes to the growing immigrant population.
- *Open Spaces*: a weekly news magazine from Wyoming Public Radio that provides in-depth coverage of issues impacting state residents. The show, which is also available through podcast, recently featured interviews with

- *Thinking Out Loud*: a daily, one-hour show, available as a podcast, from Oregon Public Broadcasting about politics and global issues, music and sports, books and the environment. Importantly, the show includes an interactive website that feeds into - and from - the radio conversation. Listeners go online to discuss a wide range of topics covered by the radio show, fostering a community of local, interested and engaged citizens.
- *Charlotte Talks*: a one hour, daily talk show produced by WFAE that centers on the city's economic growth, politics, arts, culture and social issues. The show invites community leaders, activists and experts on the air to discuss topics of importance to Charlotte residents. For example, a recent show, *Child Abuse and the Role of Government*, brought together a judge, the head of the local child protective services agency and an area children's advocate to discuss the responsibility and role of government and community when it comes to protecting children.
- *St. Louis on the Air*: a production of KWMU, this program is a one hour issues conversation on topics unique to the St. Louis area. In addition to providing relevant and timely information about compelling local topics,

the show also provides follow-up information on related community resources, including local events and nonprofit organizations.

- *The Brian Lehrer Show*: produced by WNYC, this Peabody award-winning daily program puts New Yorkers directly in touch with news makers to exchange opinions and ideas with call-in listeners. Topics range from the City's education and housing policy, to the changing face of welfare, to the expanding Chinese economy—all issues that shape life in the City. It frequently partners with the station's Jerome L. Greene Performance Space to present live events and radio broadcasts that draw upon the City's experts, community leaders and members of local government.
- *The UBS Forum*: Located on the top floor of Minnesota Public Radio's St. Paul facility, *The UBS Forum* hosts community discussions, public debates and live program recordings. The studio serves as a catalyst for dialogue across cultures and constituencies, resulting in a deeper understanding of critical issues and public media content that draws on the collective knowledge of communities. Past discussions focused on such topics as transportation, autism and local public schools.
- *The Exchange*: Iowa Public Radio's talk program that focuses on the news, issues and events in the state. This award-winning program goes beyond the headlines of breaking stories, giving listeners access to elected

officials, framing community problems and providing listeners the chance to discuss them as well as offer ideas to solve them. During the Iowa Legislative Session, Iowa Public Radio's statehouse reporter hosts *The Exchange* on Mondays, live from the Law Library at the state capitol. This program gives great insight into what's happening at the capitol in the coming week, and lets listeners call or email their questions direct to lawmakers.

- *Baltimore Unsigned*: a weekly radio show produced by WTMD featuring album cuts, live performances and interviews with some of the area's best emerging bands. A local host, with deep, long-standing knowledge of Baltimore's music community, showcases all types of music - folk, blues, jazz, bluegrass, reggae, hip-hop and more - in the hour-long program. The playlist focuses on songs performed by new and established artists who are committed to their craft and the station has become a community cultural clearinghouse for street-level arts activities built on new and interesting contemporary popular music.
- *Ozarks At Large*: a weekday program produced by KUAF in Fayetteville, Arkansas, that provides in-depth news on the people, places and events of the Ozarks Mountains in Arkansas and Missouri. Recent topics covered on the show include: local initiatives to produce renewable energy from farm byproducts; the proposed consolidation of two area courthouses; and, an

update on historic preservation efforts aimed at saving a local church.

Ozarks At Large engages listeners on the impact of local decisions on the health of their community.

Connecting Communities Through Music

Importantly, music is an integral element of public radio's community service and the future of public media. Public radio has created a value partnership that connects music, and all those who devote their lives to it - performers, singer-songwriters, musicians, lyricists and composers - to audiences. More than 100 stations have full-time music formats and music accounts for about one of every three hours of public radio listening.¹³

Classical, jazz, folk, AAA, world and eclectic are music formats offered by public radio stations in cities large and small. Communities like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Miami, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, McAllen Texas, Rochester New York, Grand Rapids Michigan, Tulsa Oklahoma, Knoxville Tennessee and the entire states of Wyoming, Minnesota and Vermont, among others, depend on public radio stations as the only source of classical music.

For jazz enthusiasts, public radio stations in cities like Newark, Ypsilanti, Laramie, Baton Rouge, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Denver, Orlando, Seattle, San Mateo, Montgomery, Worcester, Atlanta and Las Vegas are pathways to the masters of this uniquely American musical dialect.

¹³ Station Resource Group "Public Radio in the New Network Age", page 7.

In addition to airing music, public radio stations have typically gone a step further by applying a community engagement model to this important format. Many public radio stations have fostered long-standing relationships with local cultural institutions, performers, venues and avid music fans. The result is a more robust, comprehensive and local music service—one that showcases local talent and promotes local music events through the use of in-studio performances—and builds awareness of their community's culture. Stations also amplify the impact of many in-community performances by airing or webcasting them live for the larger listening or podcasting audience.

For example, Austin's KUT has been able to leverage its partnerships with the Social Media Clubhouse and Texas State University to provide listeners around the globe a front-row seat to the city's South By Southwest (SXSW) Music festival. Listeners and visitors to KUT's website were given access to exclusive performances from numerous national and local acts, downloads, photos and exclusive interviews.

Three years ago High Plains Public Radio (HPPR), serving Southwest Kansas and the Texas Panhandle, began offering a Living Room Concert Series. This series of free concerts is open to the public and features artists traveling through the HPPR listening area. These concerts are also recorded and produced for HPPR's new Saturday evening program called "Just Hangin." These rebroadcasts allow local residents in this rural area the opportunity to listen to the concerts even if they weren't able to attend the live ones, and podcasts of the concerts are also available for download on HPPR's website.

In Boston, WUMB operates from the University of Massachusetts/Boston Campus with five public radio stations in Boston, Worcester, Falmouth, Orleans and Newburyport Massachusetts. The station serves as a local and national resource for the cultivation, promotion and preservation of various genres of folk music. WUMB engages its audiences and communities through outreach efforts focused on music in schools, music instruction workshops and instrument collections and donations for local schools and other non-profits groups.

And in Seattle, KPLU has invested in the “School of Jazz” community outreach project where the station sponsors professional mentors in high school jazz bands, records their performances and distributes a CD of the collection annually, with proceeds earmarked to acquire musical instruments for students unable to afford their own.

Classical music is experiencing a renaissance because of public radio. American Public Media is the largest producer and distributor of classical music programming in the country. Its range of innovative music programming goes from a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week classical music service to *Performance Today*, a daily two-hour classical music program, to weekly programs and specials that are mainstays of public radio. It has an exclusive partnership with the European Broadcasting Union that brings to audiences special musical broadcast events like the popular Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and a series of live broadcasts from the BBC Proms in London.

A significant music initiative was launched by NPR and 12 partner stations to provide a free, multimedia music discovery website, www.npr.org/music. The site offers

content from participating stations and NPR including live performances, studio sessions, first listens to new albums, interviews, reviews and blogs. With continuously expanding sections dedicated to rock/pop/folk, classical, jazz/blues, world and hip-hop/R&B, NPR Music curates from NPR's and the stations' extensive music archives to present thousands of features, with more than 250 new features added to the site each month.

NPR Music reaches deep into local communities thru 12 participating stations, whose sites are served with modules, widgets and original content. Station participants are: WNYC, WFUV and WBGO in the New York City area; WGBH in Boston; WXPB in Philadelphia; WDUQ in Pittsburgh; WKSU-Folk Alley in Kent Ohio; WGNU in Cincinnati; American Public Media's the Current in St. Paul/Minneapolis; KUT in Austin Texas; and KEXP and KPLU/Jazz24 in Seattle.

Public radio has preserved and enhanced the archetypal musical formats of American music history. Music formats that others have eliminated as economically unsustainable and as relics of bygone eras— jazz, classical, folk, blue grass, The Blues, Celtic – are the priceless family treasures of public radio's musical foundations. On public radio, new artists and performers are introduced and supported to expand the interpretations of these classic expressions in new ways for our audience. Public radio's increasingly important and utilized curatorial role underscores the value of music as a critical component of America's information needs.

Serving a Changing Audience: Expanding Deployment of Technology

The core of public radio is an interconnected, interdependent, public service network of programming producers and stations serving the American public through broadcasting, websites, internet streaming and podcasting.¹⁴

As technology and audience consumption needs have altered the delivery of news, NPR and public radio stations have launched an integrated strategy to give more people greater access to better information. The 1967 Public Broadcasting Act gave enduring reality to two important concepts: public funds for public broadcasting and the creation of a national, independent, not-for-profit network of television and radio broadcasters to serve the American public.

More than four decades later, public radio's embrace of new technologies is unveiling a new Public Media enterprise to serve and engage a wider and more diverse audience. The future of public service media will be a larger, more diverse and more inclusive vision: of audiences served; of technologies and platforms deployed; of content partners engaged. Deployment of the Public Media Platform, under development by NPR with funding assistance from CPB and in partnership with CPB, APM, PRI, PBS and PRX, will begin the realization of a new network to serve America. It will translate the original objectives of the Public Broadcasting Act to the digital era. Public radio's embrace of the

¹⁴ Public radio programs *This American Life* and *Radiolab* are leaders in podcasting, with *Radiolab* attracting 1 million podcasts per month. Overall, including NPR.org, monthly podcast downloads total nearly 15 million. These multi-platform programs bring new audiences to public media.

networked environment as a primary platform¹⁵ for audience and community service is reflected in the following initiatives:

- In July 2008 NPR released an open *Application Programming Interface (API)* to spread public radio content across the Web. This tool will allow ready transfer of content among websites, meaning that NPR, public radio stations, other public radio programmers and individual users can pull content to and from each other and weave it into their web sites, smart phone apps and other digital paths. The principle of openness encompassed in the NPR *API* is a fundamental extension of the standards of free and universal access that rest at the heart of public radio's public service commitment.

In March 2010, the process of taking in, or ingesting, station content into the API began. Now, in addition to pushing outward hundreds of thousands of stories from NPR and the twelve NPR Music partner stations, content from several pilot public radio stations has been pulled into the OPEN API. Soon content from Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) and the Northwest News Network (N3), KQED in San Francisco, WXPB in Philadelphia and WBUR in Boston will be posted and available for use. Efforts to ingest more content from more stations are ongoing.

¹⁵ Station Resource Group (SRG) report, "Public Radio in the New Networked Age", part of SRG's broad-based, in-depth undertaking to widen the use and deepen the value of public radio.

From launch in 2008 to March 2010, use of the OPEN NPR API has grown significantly and will continue to expand as more public radio stations opt to use this flexible and open digital content exchange platform. It has very significant volume delivery capacity. For instance, in the six months of tracking stories delivered, the NPR API has served up almost five billion stories. Last month alone, it pushed out over 1.1 billion -- demonstrating its ability to meet both the diverse needs and day-to-day working demands of the system.¹⁶

WBUR and Southern California Public Radio use the API to place NPR stories, audio segments and photos up on their websites. Importantly, flexibility and local station decision-making are built into the API, features that permit each station to determine specific content usage and how that content is delivered to its website. WBUR, for example, is displaying full transcripts with stories while Southern California Public Radio has constructed a unique opt in/out selection system enabling its editors to view complete story selection by topic and make specific choices based on its audience interest.

- In October 2009, NPR initiated *Argo*, a new journalism project to develop in-depth, local coverage on topics critical to communities and the nation.

This effort, funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and

¹⁶ API volume is partially constructed by combining number of times users open websites and mobile devices to access NPR and public radio content with number of stories featured on each access site. For example, every time the Top Stories section of the NPR iPhone app is accessed, the OPEN API delivers 25 stories to that user.

the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, establishes a pilot group of public radio stations with resources to expand original reporting, and to curate, distribute and share online content about high-interest, specialized subjects. The two-year pilot will help a dozen stations establish themselves as definitive sources of news on specialized, local and regional issue areas. ARGO stations and coverage specializations are: KPLU/Seattle, *The emerging global health industry*; WGBH/Boston, *Living on the Frontlines of Global Warming*; Oregon Public Broadcasting/Portland, *Environment, Development and Public Policy in Oregon*; WBUR/Boston, *Economic Impact of Health Care*; KQED/San Francisco, *The Role of Technology in Education*; WNYC/New York City, *The New York State Budget in Crisis -- and New York City is Paying a Price*; KALW/San Francisco, *Cops, Courts & the Bay Area Communities*; WXPN/Philadelphia, - *Discovering Local Music in Philadelphia*; KPCC/ Los Angeles - *Emerging Immigrant Communities in Southern California*; WAMU/Washington, D.C. – *The Changing Face of DC*; KPBS/San Diego – *Military Families and the Collision Between Civilian and Military Life*; MPR/Minneapolis-St. Paul – *Higher Education in Minnesota*.

Each topic will have a separate site, featuring daily contributions from a journalist-blogger, curated relevant content, and community features for audience engagement. Content from the Argo sites will flow into the

NPR.org API, for potential distribution throughout public radio including NPR.org. and to local stations on-air programming. The first six sites will launch by the end of July, the next six by the end of August. The goal is to create a technology backbone and develop best practices to minimize as much as possible every station's barrier to participation.

- The ***Public Media Platform***, (PMP) under development by NPR with funding assistance from CPB and in partnership with CPB, APM, PRI, PBS and PRX, will allow content from a wide variety of independent and institutional producers to be combined in a common back-end system; and then for that content to be extracted and displayed on a wide variety of digital platforms based on business rules set by the producers. Realizing public media's full potential requires a strategic investment in an open information architecture that harnesses the collective power of the network, while encouraging continued innovation by individual producers. This flexible common platform to support public media adaption and collaboration is a giant step towards the creation and deployment of a new network to serve the changing and expanding news and information needs of the American public. The public radio system has an opportunity to improve its national authority and local relevance across an expanding number of platforms by forming a digital network whose impact is far

stronger than the sum of its parts – an approach that has been so successful in broadcasting.

- ***Mobile Platforms:*** The December 2009 re-launch of NPR's mobile site brought several new features to bring the local-national strength of public radio's broadcast operations to users of mobile devices. Public radio's mobile Web audience can stream live signals from nearly every public radio station in the country, from Anchorage to Bangor; listen to hundreds of public radio programs; and, hear full-quality audio over the iPhone and Blackberry. The site will allow users to search for stations by zip code, call letters, or city/state. Users will also be able to "favorite" or bookmark multiple stations. Users can stream the audio links on the site from within their device's browser. The result is superior audio quality as well as availability in a wider range of audio formats: AAC, MP3, WMA, 3gp, and RM. Station newscasts will continue to be available via the new NPR Mobile Web.

Mobile communication device applications for the iPhone, Blackberry, Android, iPad, AT&T, T-Mobile Portals and other web-enabled devices have been deployed to stimulate access to public radio content. These newly deployed tools are helping to boost mobile traffic. In the early months of 2010 mobile use of NPR products is rapidly expanding. So far this year, NPR has experienced average 20 percent month-to-month

increases in mobile traffic. Prior to releasing the NPR News iPhone app, mobile use comprised just 5 percent of NPR's total digital traffic. In the early months of 2010, after the release of apps for iPhone, iPad and Android devices, mobile traffic comprised over a quarter (27 percent) of all traffic.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

NPR believes the public radio system has an integral and primary role in present and future information needs of American communities in a digital age. Free and virtually universal access to public radio content exists today through an interconnected, interdependent network of public radio stations and programming entities. And NPR and its public radio partners are in fast pursuit of a robust digital media ecosystem. As the FCC gathers and assesses opinions on this rapidly evolving area, NPR suggests the following policy recommendations to assist public radio in meeting the news, information and cultural programming needs of tomorrow's America.

1. **Support Deployment of the *Public Media Platform*:** The Commission, the Administration and the Congress need to support and fund the full deployment of *The Public Media Platform* to push the Public Broadcasting Act forward into the 21st Century. Public broadcasting entities already are engaged in deployment of internet and mobile digital tools to expand and improve public service and to be more responsive to the information needs of Americans. Viewed collectively, these initiatives constitute the emergence of a new network, an open and flexible digital exchange system to augment the

interconnected, interdependent network of broadcast stations so successfully fostered by the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act.

2. **Support Increased Funding:** Federal financial support for public broadcasting, long a reliable, essential component of the system's overall financial resources, has been stable, but largely flat for the past decade. In addition, America's financial crisis created enormous revenue pressure on the public radio system with resulting reductions in staffing and programming almost across the board. To more completely realize the service opportunities of new technology and to fill the void left by a contracting and changing commercial news industry, additional public funds for public media need to be provided. New, expanded funding for public media must include a re-examination of the methods currently used for distribution of federal funds. While maintaining scrupulous adherence to transparency and accountability, and while maintaining funding support for existing stations serving their communities, flexibility must be provided to use new, increased public funds for deeper, expanded and more responsive coverage of local and regional information needs. Exploration and adoption of digital, web-based content creation and distribution assets, for example, are essential components of a public media construct that meets the needs of today's America. The Commission, the Administration and Congress should consider ways to increase federal funds in a framework that foster the strengths of the current

system and assists with efforts to engage the contributions of new, emerging not-for-profit public media entities.

- 3. Ease Copyright Restrictions on Public Media Entities:** Copyright laws, especially those relating to music, have become highly complex and confusing, causing significant difficulties for public media entities striving to expand and improve their public service offerings to a growing audience on multiple platforms. While the rights of content creators are recognized and protected, attention must be given to the use of content for public service by public media entities. The Commission, the Administration and Congress need to consider changes to licenses used by public media entities to enable the use of music regardless of distribution platform. Noncommercial, nonprofit use of copyrighted content by public media entities is already contemplated, and accorded special status, in the Copyright Act. However, those provisions need to be updated to reflect the digital realities of the current landscape.

For the foregoing reasons, NPR urges the Commission to act expeditiously on the recommendations set forth above.

Respectfully submitted,



Kinsey Wilson
Senior Vice President & General Manager,
NPR Digital Media
Gregory A. Lewis
Associate General Counsel
Michael Starling

Chief Technology Officer and
Executive Director, NPR Labs
Rishi Hingoraney
Director – Public Policy & Legislation
Michael Riksen
Vice President – Policy & Representation

Future of Media and the Contributions of Public Media to the Information Needs of America

The Commission poses a series of questions focused on gathering data on staffing and financial trends, initiatives to employ new digital technologies, changes in public statutes and regulations that will foster a healthier public media system, and how public broadcasting might engage new and emerging nonprofit media entities. As summarized earlier, public radio remains a daily, primary, vital source of news, information and cultural programming to millions of Americans. The resilience and stability of public radio's operation model and revenue base is made apparent by its ability to withstand more than \$200 million in revenue losses during the preceding two years. While not immune to staffing and programming reductions, public radio remains today vibrant, growing and committed to a future of expanded service.

The following responses are provided to the Commission's questions about the future of public media:

With regard to national-oriented noncommercial television and radio (including public broadcasting stations), what have been the trends and what is the current state of affairs regarding news staff and coverage (international, national and local)?

The recent economic crisis produced revenue shortfalls across the public radio system that totaled more than \$200 million. Staffing, programming, salary and employee benefit reductions were deployed to balance budgets. Financial reserves, where available, were tapped to bring stability to news gathering activities.

In this time of financial shortages and challenges, NPR and its public radio partners are moving to fill the vacuum in local, national and international news caused by the contraction in commercial news sources. This trend, (well-documented by, among others, the Pew Research Center for Excellence in Journalism, the Knight Commission's Report on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy and the Reconstruction of American Journalism, by Leonard Downie, Jr. and Michael Schudson), is most acute locally and internationally. Our response is to become a stronger primary news source, with more and better hard news. Two recent initiatives are illustrative.

In December 2009, NPR added to its original investigative capacity by hiring a Deputy Managing Editor and boosting a core investigative team to work with beat and field reporters across the newsroom. The first major result was a multipart series that aired in mid-February –“Going Radical”- about the life, background and radicalization of accused Christmas Day bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmatallab. This investigation took three NPR correspondents around the globe

for clearest and in-depth portraits of Abdulmatallab from London, West Africa and Yemen. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123786473>

While active for only a few months, this new commitment has produced very significant news findings in collaboration with other non-profit investigative entities:

- NPR and the Center for Public Integrity teamed up to examine the unaddressed problem of sexual assault on college campuses. This series found that despite federal laws created to protect students, colleges and universities have failed to protect women from an epidemic of sexual assault; and, that students found responsible for sexual assault are rarely expelled or suspended.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124001493>
- The Center for Investigate Reporting and NPR produced a series of stories on confidential informants looking closely at the specifics of how these government law enforcement human assets play by their own rules and, in some cases, blur the line between right and wrong or simply ignore the law.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123385312&ps=rs>

Investments also have been made to strengthen NPR's *Newscast*, the 37 hourly reports each day on breaking events, and to provide 24 hour, seven day coverage for broadcast, web and mobile platforms. This provides audiences with more information about fast moving and breaking stories.

NPR also continues to invest in training. With assistance from the Knight Foundation, NPR has been providing its journalists with multiday, often multi-week, education and skills training to serve the audience in the digital space. By the end of February 2010, more than 400 people at NPR participated in digital media training sessions. A digital literacy training curriculum has been created to

provide continuity and ensure that the benefits of new technology will become permanent fixtures of daily news gathering and reporting.

For local noncommercial television and radio stations, what have been the trends for staffing, the amount of local news and information aired, audience ratings for such programming and local station financial health?

As summarized earlier, America's financial crisis created enormous revenue pressure on local public radio stations and produced reductions in staffing and programming almost across the board. Based on data compiled annually and most recently portrayed for 2009, the commitment of public radio stations to local news and public affairs programming has continued to grow. In 2004, 595 stations carried a local news/talk programming and by 2009 increased to 681. Total hours aired increased as well, growing from 5,183 per week in 2004 to 5,693 in 2009. Locally produced programming typically accounts for roughly 10 percent of all listening to major market news and information stations, with local programming on New York's WNYC, WABE in Atlanta, KUT in Austin, KUHF in Houston and KCRW in Los Angeles contributing as much as a third of total station listening.¹⁷

The number of reporters and producers at public radio stations is also increasing. Station survey results from 2006 and update again in early 2010, show the total number of full-time reporters working at NPR member stations increased by 17 percent; the number of part-time reporters increased by 14 percent; and, the number of full-time news producers increased by 18 percent. It is also worth noting

¹⁷ WABE, KUHF, KUT and KCRW are mixed format stations featuring news, information and music programming.

that most of the stations surveyed in 2006, 81 percent, - regardless of station format or market size - had explicit plans to expand local news coverage.

Another indicator of local station news production comes from their participation in NPR and other national news shows. In 2008 and 2009, for example, public radio station produced more than 1,400 segments that appeared in NPR news shows *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered* and *Weekend Edition*. Each of these stories featured a public radio station journalist and was produced on location by the public radio station.

Significant, ongoing attention will be devoted to expanding local and regional coverage thru ARGO and CPB's recently announced Local Journalism Centers (LJC's). This new major journalism initiative will combine CPB and participating stations' resources to boost newsgathering and its distribution. The Centers will form teams of multimedia journalists to focus on issues of particular relevance to each region. Their journalistic work product will be presented regionally and nationally via digital platforms, community engagement programs and radio and television broadcasts. The LJC initiative is another illustration of public radio and CPB's long-standing commitment to journalism.

[What have been the trends in funding from governmental, private sources and viewer/listener donations?](#)

Projected revenue losses for the public radio system for the preceding two years totaled \$210 million, with declines occurring in 5 of the system's 6 primary funding sources. Hardest hit and having the most impact on system operations

were reductions in corporate underwriting, down 11 percent; grants from foundations, down 11.6 percent; and, support from state and local governments and university/school licensees, down 23 percent. Individual contributions to stations were marginally impacted, while funding support based on federal appropriations to the station community from CPB remained stable. While some revenue elements have stabilized and are beginning to rebound, it is improbable that recent overall revenue losses within public radio will be recaptured.

Of significance to the topic of public funds for public media, federal financial support for public broadcasting has been stable, but largely flat for the past decade. The Community Service Grant (CSG) pool of funds for public radio stations, which flow from federal appropriations to CPB, in 2004 was \$79 million and in 2009 was \$83 million, a welcomed increase but insufficient to cover inflationary costs and, more importantly, increasing demands on public radio stations to provide more local and regional news. Operational efficiencies offer modest benefits, but there simply is no substitute for money in the people-centric task of news gathering. Public radio has made significant strides in attracting larger sums of money from foundations and corporate underwriting, and has implemented strategies to boost individual and philanthropic contributions as well. And, as a statement of audience loyalty, contributions from local station supporters

are stable and up in many cases¹⁸. The fact remains, however, that federal financial support for public media is dramatically below levels in other western democracies.

What has been the impact of competition for audience from the Internet or other information sources?

Public radio's broadcast audience continues to grow and remains remarkably loyal. Fall 2009 audience surveys indicate 34 million Americans listen to public radio programming each week. Two instructive measures of audience loyalty are found in time spent listening and in intentional listening. While average, weekly time spent listening lessened somewhat, intentional listening by the public radio audience remains a remarkable indicator of dedication. In 22 of the top 30 US markets, public radio stations rank either first or second in intentional listening.

A recent Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism offers an interesting insight into unfolding audience content consumption patterns. According to Pew, new web-based audio services continue to grow in terms of audience size and usage frequency, but traditional AM/FM radio remains far and away the most common way people get audio news. And there are indications of change in the Pew report as well. Between 2004 and 2005 the News/Talk radio audience began to age. Meanwhile, the percentage of people who listen to online radio in a given month and the frequency of streaming-- just station streams, not counting services like

¹⁸ WNYC's new classical music station, WQXR, gained more than 10,000 individual contributing members since launching in October 2009.

Pandora-- is up 28 percent since last year (54 million to 69 million). That said the average weekly reach of online radio is 17 percent of the U.S. population, a far cry from AM/FM's 93 percent.

Pew also included this observation: "Radio is well on its way to becoming something altogether new – a medium called audio...To a greater degree than some other media, radio is unusually well suited to the digital transition. Voice and music are mobile and move easily among new platforms. And audio has done better as a medium of holding its audience than some other sectors."¹⁹

Pew's overall finding is that audio-based news delivery is relatively strong in terms of audience. NPR's Audience Insight & Research Department finds a connection with the Pew results and those internal to NPR: radio listening remains strong and is by far the largest single platform in terms of audience. But monthly visitors to NPR.org have grown tremendously in the last year, as has usage of NPR's two mobile apps and its mobile site. Importantly, NPR research also shows that most digital audio use, regardless of platform, is additive to public radio listening on the radio, not replacing it.²⁰

How are public broadcasters using the Internet, mobile applications, their multicast channels/additional program streams, or other new technologies to provide local news and information?

¹⁹ Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, State of the News Media 2009, http://www.stateofthemedias.org/2009/narrative_audio_intro.php?cat=0&media=10

²⁰ NPR 2010 iPad Research; 2009 NPR iPhone Research; 2006-2009 NPR podcast research; 2006 NPR satellite radio research

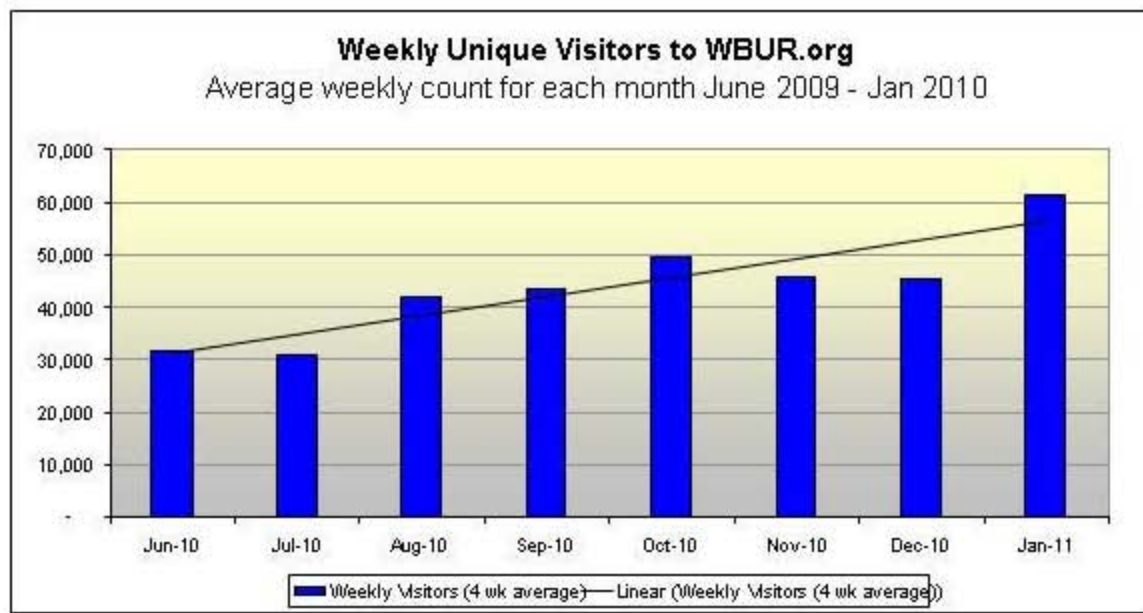
The public service imperative of public radio to realize a “social dividend” demands the exploration of new technologies to bring better information to more Americans. Innovations using broadcasting, web and mobile as content delivery platforms highlight public radio’s initiatives in all markets, including regional and local. Public radio has embraced the networked environment as a primary platform for audience and community service.

The NPR OPEN API, or Application Programming Interface, is the technology foundation for expansion into internet and mobile programming delivery. This simple, flexible set of content sharing tools is the IT “machinery” powering the re-launch of NPR.org and the operation of a number of public radio station websites. It is also the technology enabler for the rapid development and deployment of programming applications developed by public radio for mobile communication devices like the iPhone, iPad, Android and Blackberry.

As described by Colin Fogarty, editor of public radio’s Northwest News Network (N3), “the API is like a rain cloud. Each story is a rain drop. The ingest system allows the moisture to evaporate up into the cloud. The trick is to program station websites to take the right drops at the right time and make a coherent and valuable feed of local, regional, national and international news. That’s what we already have on the radio. Now it’s time to do that as well on the web.”²¹

²¹ “API Ingest with a Northwest News Network Flavor,” *Inside npr.org*, March 29, 2010

Use of the OPEN NPR API has grown significantly and will continue to expand as more public radio stations opt to use this flexible and open digital content exchange platform. The API's ability to meet both the diverse needs and day-to-day working demands of the system is a key component to further adoption. Early indicators are positive as illustrated by the graph below showing growth in WBUR's website following adoption of the OPEN API.



The OPEN API has very substantial volume and delivery capacity. As referenced earlier, in the month of March more than 1 billion stories were delivered to all current API platform sites: public radio station websites, NPR.org, all the mobile applications and NPR Music. The importance of that statistic isn't just how big the monthly number was, or the rate of growth, but the simple fact that the API handled the traffic.

Mobile communication applications for the iPhone, Blackberry, Android, iPad, AT&T, T-Mobile Portals and other devices have been deployed to stimulate access to public radio content. These newly deployed tools are helping to boost mobile traffic. In the early months of 2010, mobile access of public radio programming expanded rapidly. So far this year, NPR has experienced average 20 percent month-to-month increases in mobile traffic. Prior to releasing the NPR News iPhone app, mobile use comprised just 5percent of NPR's total digital traffic. In the early months of 2010, after the release of apps for iPhone, iPad and Android devices, mobile traffic now comprises over a quarter (27 percent) of all NPR page views. Average session time in the iPhone app is roughly 9 minutes.

The prominence given to local public radio station programming is an important element of expanded deployment of mobile applications. Mobile users have access to local public radio station content. The iPhone, iPad and Android applications can stream live programming from nearly every public radio station in America; both the applications and NPR Mobile also enable access to stations' on-demand streams. This feature suite permits the public radio audience to select its favorite station programming and provides each public radio station with the opportunity to stay connected with its audience regardless of how or what platform that audience is using. Users can search by station or program and then connect to more than 1,000 on-air, HD and on-demand streams from 600 NPR stations.

In the arena of broadcast technology, public radio stations are moving to complete the conversion from analog to digital over-the-air broadcasting. By the end of 2009, 463 stations were on the air with digital signals and more than 230 were multicasting (sending out two or more program streams) to their communities and listeners, with 101 new full time news-based multicast channels.

Recent action by the FCC permitting public radio stations to boost HD signal power and provide expanded service coverage was a welcomed and needed step.²² Many public radio stations will be seeking to boost power to better serve their communities in the coming years.

Public Radio is using digital broadcasting as a tool to improve and broaden the reach of programming to poorly served and un-served audiences. Radio reading services for the blind and deaf are becoming more accessible. Stations' service to communities during times of local and regional emergencies will benefit from digital broadcasting's more flexible and adaptable features. Digital broadcasting technology has enabled public radio stations to:

➤ **Provide increased local services to their communities**

Stations are doubling and tripling programming offerings by multicasting through HD radio channels 2 and 3 options while super-serving existing and new groups of listeners. Local community events such as concerts, town hall meetings, committee hearings, legislative floor sessions and other

²² http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-208A1.pdf

government programming are broadcast live using Internet streaming and HD radio technology. Listeners with HD radio receivers may view a variety of useful messages that scroll across radio display screens, including artist names and song titles, live weather and real-time traffic updates, local news, school closings, movie lists, and emergency alerts.

➤ **Increase the diversity of their programming by providing additional content for their current audience**

Constantly seeking to improve its service to listeners, HD radio channels 2 and 3 mean more music, entertainment and news programming options for listeners. The additional HD radio channels allow stations to add public affairs programming, educational instruction, international news, specialty music streams (jazz, classical, bluegrass, folk, rock, pop, international, etc.), and non-English language news. To further increase program diversity for distribution on HD channels, some stations are training community members, including students and older adults, to professionally produce their own stories and performances.

➤ **Bring the content rich world of public radio to blind and deaf audiences**

Relying often on small armies of volunteers, over 120 stations provide public radio reading services for the blind. This life-line service provides news education and readings from daily newspapers, magazine articles and books for the blind and low-vision community. There are stations that

provide 24-hour over the air radio reading services and digitally-produced programs that serve the illiterate and print handicapped in local communities. Text information services such as artist and song titles, local weather, news updates, school closings, emergency warnings and public service alerts may also be incorporated into the signal for deaf and hard of hearing who can read this information on digital radio displays.

How does the role of public media differ from that of commercial media?

The fundamental difference between the roles of commercial and public media stems from their vastly divergent models—one based on ratings and advertising revenues, and the other an audience-supported model based on public service, localism and community impact. As a result, public media's nonprofit and mission-oriented approach produces a level of quality—and engenders a degree of trust and loyalty—unrivaled by most of commercial media.

In addition, there is widespread understanding that public media exists to provide what the market cannot. As long as it remains unprofitable to invest in programming or technology that involves too much risk or expense in relation to expected audience numbers in the most favored demographic categories, commercial media cannot be counted on to make those investments. Indeed, it has never been designed to do so. In this role, public media has excelled and continues to excel in filling this void.

For example, NPR continues to leverage new technology to provide disabled communities with access to high-quality content. Through innovative use of HD Radio technology, NPR is working to improve Radio Reading Services for the visually-impaired, and will soon roll out new services like Captioned Radio for the hearing-impaired. Services like these represent a deep commitment to reaching underserved audiences. This commitment may not be commercially viable in a profit/loss context, yet it plays such a vital role for so many Americans.

Similarly, public radio's commitment to in-depth local news and public affairs is in sharp contrast to the sound-byte, traffic-and-weather content found elsewhere. And rapid expansion onto new media platforms puts public radio on the leading edge of these new tools to serve the American public. While commercial media undoubtedly plays a unique role in the American media landscape, the role of public media is to reach Americans wherever and whenever they are consuming media.

[Should the Public Broadcasting Act be amended to restructure and augment investments in noncommercial media?](#)

As demonstrated elsewhere in these comments, public radio has broadened its horizons and is aggressively using new and rapidly emerging media platforms to expand the reach of its trademark noncommercial news, information, and cultural content to new audiences. Yet, for millions of Americans, public radio is the primary means of receiving public media content each day, and it will likely remain an important foundation for the creation and dissemination of public media content

for many years to come. Thus, while additional funding will certainly be needed to sustain public media in the new millennium, Federal policy makers should build upon rather than dismantle or take from the existing system.

Congress has devoted substantial federal resources to funding the construction and operation of public radio and television stations for a specific reason: stations serve as local outlets of community expression. "Local stations are the bedrock of this system [of public radio broadcasting] and as such must be responsive to the needs and desires of the public which they serve."²³ The Public Broadcasting Act incorporates several measures to ensure that public radio stations remain locally licensed, locally governed, locally staffed, and locally programmed public media outlets. These include requiring stations to establish and maintain community advisory boards,²⁴ conduct open public meetings,²⁵ and, in the case of stations licensed to local school boards, public colleges and universities, and other governmental bodies, the presence of public board members.

Based on the significant Federal investment in public broadcasting and the role of public broadcasting stations as important local public media outlets, restructuring the Public Broadcasting Act should be done carefully. It may be

²³ S. Rep. No. 222, 90th Cong., 1st Sess. 7 (1967).

²⁴ See 47 U.S.C. § 396(k)(8) (requiring each public radio station not licensed to a governmental entity to establish and maintain a community advisory board as a condition of receiving CPB funds).

²⁵ See 47 U.S.C. § 396(k)(4) (requiring each public radio station to hold board meetings that are open to the public and to give the public reasonable notice of these meetings in order to receive Federal funding).

appropriate to consider reallocating funding under the Act among the current categories of recipients,²⁶ but the current funding should not be diverted to support new categories of recipients or activities. Instead, Congress should provide additional funds to support the development of new public media and the existing system's collaborations with it. Such an approach would permit policymakers to explore different approaches to investing in public media and serving the public without jeopardizing existing services on which so many Americans depend.

The current Act, though signed into law more than 40 years ago, works well on a primary basis: public funds flow from the Congress to an independent, private not-for-profit grant making entity to local stations to provide information services to local populations. This ground-up approach is important, with its emphasis on local station entities, with significant financial and operational input from the audiences they serve, deciding how to use public funds. Local editorial and operational control, local program decision-making and local and regional financial support have been key elements in public radio's success. These practices are instructive as guidelines for future reviews of the Act.

[What has been the role of government regulation?](#)

De-regulation, or the absence of government regulation, has had a significant salutary effect on public radio stations. For enterprises institutionally

²⁶ The Act currently allocates funding for CPB's administrative expenses, system-wide expenses of the public broadcasting system, public television stations, public radio stations, and program production. See 47 C.F.R. 396(k).

committed to delivering public service content and services to unserved and underserved audiences, government mandates are not necessary. As nonprofit educational organizations and institutions, or in other cases as governmental entities themselves, public radio is committed to localism, to ascertaining the needs of local communities, and to developing programming and engaging audiences to serve their needs. Public radio stations already utilize community advisory boards, conduct open meetings, and feature public members on their governing boards. Indeed, public radio stations have to serve their local communities because they are dependent upon them for direct financial support.

Nor is government regulation necessarily effective. A station providing primarily music and other cultural fare may be serving its community's needs just as well as a station emphasizing news and information. A locally originated program may not serve the public as well as a national or regional program devoted to an issue of common concern. Determinations of local programming needs are best made by local entities serving local audiences and communities.

Government regulation can also disserve the public interest by forcing public radio stations to reallocate resources away from serving their communities to tracking and reporting about their public service. For instance, requiring that each station employ at least one fulltime employee is more likely to force licensees to abandon stations operating in remote areas, and the result would be less service, not more. The greatest challenge for many public radio stations is a lack of resources,

and government regulation, however well intentioned, often will not enhance their public service, and it may undermine it.

Internet and Mobile

What role will and should user-generated journalism play?

American Public Media (APM) pioneered Public Insight Journalism (PIJ) in its Minnesota Public Radio newsroom and is now using the model to inform coverage on its national shows, including Marketplace and Speaking of Faith. Public Insight Journalism relies on a growing network of 86,000 knowledgeable sources whose insights and experiences serve to inform journalists, help them produce richer, more relevant stories, and connect them to the communities they serve. Using customized data collection and analytical tools, radio producers and reporters can quickly find and learn from thousands of people who have experience or knowledge on a given topic or story that can guide and inform their reporting. This groundbreaking initiative has won financial support from the Knight Foundation to help APM build on and combine the values of traditional journalism with the technique of crowd-sourcing, which is seeking information from the audience. By the end of 2010, more than three dozen public radio stations will be employing PIJ in their news gathering activities, from major markets like WNYC, KPCC in Los Angeles and KUOW in Seattle, to smaller newsrooms like New Hampshire Public Radio, WGCU in Fort Myers, Florida, and High Plains Public Radio in Garden City, Kansas.

What might be the role of popular technologies heretofore associated with entertainment or social interaction, such as gaming systems or social media?

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter have become an integral part of everyday life for millions of people around the world. As public radio grows to serve the audience beyond the radio, social media is becoming an increasingly important aspect of interaction and transparency with our audience and with a variety of communities. Properly used, social networking sites can also be very valuable newsgathering and reporting tools and can speed research and extend a reporter's contacts.

As noted in the July 2007 report by American University's Center for Social Media, "social media tools promise a different kind of public media in the future: a public media in which members of the public play an active role in shaping media, and in so doing create a living public forum."²⁷ That notion very much has become evident in responses from public radio journalists and public radio social media leaders in covering evolving stories of crisis and emergency. Coverage of Hurricane Gustav in 2008, for example, was aided by a group of active Twitter users who built a tool that allowed for rapid collection and dissemination of information as it developed on location. Very similar actions occurred during recent outbreaks of fire in southern California and in coverage and public response to the earthquake in Haiti. Furthermore, the NPR social media team has been

²⁷ http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/files/pdf/public_radio_report3.pdf, page 2.

deeply involved in actions to connect information sources to responders and citizens involved in the recent Gulf oil spill.